

Postal Card to the Capital

From Goldwater,

Without Soft Soap, to . . .

By MARTIN TOLCHIN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27 — Barry Goldwater seldom minced words in more than 30 years in Washington, and he is no more circumspect in retirement.

The former Arizona Senator, who is widely accepted as a leader of modern Republican conservatism, has contempt for some fellow Republicans, praise for some Democrats and advice on how to get ahead in Washington.

President Reagan either knew of the diverting of Iranian funds to the Nicaraguan rebels and lied to the public, Mr. Goldwater said, or "he wasn't paying much attention to his job." He pronounced Richard M. Nixon "the world's biggest liar," while Harry S. Truman was "the best President of the last 100 years."

Nobody expected the ailing Mr. Goldwater, who will be 80 on New Year's Day, to put his arthritic legs up on his desk and while away the hours watching sunsets from his mountaintop home in Phoenix, but few foresaw his current schedule.

Memoirs and Lectures

He is busy publicizing his memoirs, compiled in a new book, "Goldwater," which he has written with Jack Casserly. He lectures daily at Arizona State University, which he calls "the best fun I've ever had in my life," as he reflects on the mores and pitfalls of political Washington.

The greatest lesson that Washington teaches, he said in a telephone interview from Phoenix, is: "No matter what you do, be honest. That sticks out in Washington."

Find a mentor, he advises new senators. "I look back at my own experience," he said. "As soon as I got to the Senate, I had already picked out the man I admired, and I made it a point to get very close to him."

The man was Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, a Republican leader who championed the conservative cause in unsuccessful campaigns for the Presidency, and is memorialized by a carillon on Capitol Hill. "I pretty much let him guide me," Mr. Goldwater recalled. "Every new senator

needs a man like that, somebody he feels free to go to for advice. You need somebody who's been around, who knows how to do things, knows the ins and outs, all the intricate maneuvers of the Senate, maneuvers you don't learn overnight."

Wasted Talent in Senate

There is a lot of wasted talent in the Senate, Mr. Goldwater said. "They don't always pick a man for a committee based on his experience," he noted. Consequently, "a lot of people don't like their committees and don't do their best."

He laments what he sees as the decline in stature of his colleagues. "When I got there, I wouldn't say that the Senate was filled with giants, but we had great men," he said. "When you heard they were going to speak on the floor, you dropped everything, and went over and listened to them."

"Dick Russell was one of the giants," Mr. Goldwater said. "Walter George was another."

Yes, the two Georgia Senators were segregationists, Mr. Goldwater said, but "all the Southerners were segregationists — it wasn't a big issue when I first went there." He added, "It should have been."

But things haven't changed that drastically, Mr. Goldwater continued. "Today most of the Southerners are basically segregationists, but they don't sound that way," he said. "You can't be raised in the South, and not be a segregationist."

An exception, Mr. Goldwater said, is the younger senators. "The new breed is anti-segregationist, but the old breed is not."

Satisfaction and Regret

His greatest satisfaction in five terms in the Senate, Mr. Goldwater said, was enactment of his 1986 Defense Department bill, which strengthened the position of the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, provided more authority to field commanders and stiffened requirements for senior officers in joint commands. "It's getting along well," he said. "In five, six or seven years, we'll have a much finer military, with officers with enough background to serve any command they're given."

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His greatest regret, he said, was that his late wife, Peggy, to whom he dedicates his book, never liked Washington. "She didn't live with me much," he said. "She had to live out here in the West, which she loved. I just didn't have her with me, and I wished I had."

An unvarnished conservative, Mr. Goldwater nevertheless has unkind words for Mr. Reagan and Mr. Nixon, and praise for some Democrats.

"Ronald Reagan's problem was that he appointed people from California who he felt loyal to," Mr. Goldwater said. "That's not always the

way to act in politics. If he didn't know about Iran-contra, he wasn't paying much attention to his job. If he did know about it, he told a lie."

"I don't know how any man sitting in the White House could fail to know what's going on with a lieutenant colonel spending \$50 million," Mr. Goldwater said, referring to the former National Security Council staff officer, Oliver L. North. "That's quite a chunk of money."

He has nothing but contempt for Richard Nixon. "I have no use for Nixon," Mr. Goldwater said. "I call him the world's biggest liar, and he's never done anything to disprove that."

On the other hand, he believes President Carter has been underestimated. "As Jimmy Carter goes further into history, his standing is going to go up," Mr. Goldwater said. "He was a man who went into the office without knowing much about it. He got the wrong kind of people around him. He was a very religious man, and that served him well."

However, Mr. Goldwater voiced scorn for Adm. Stansfield Turner, Mr. Carter's classmate at the Naval Academy whom he appointed as Director of Central Intelligence. "He was probably one hell of a good commander of an aircraft carrier," Mr. Goldwater said, "but he damn near ruined the C.I.A."

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President Ford "wasn't there long enough to set the world on fire," Mr. Goldwater went on, but "the great thing he did was to return dignity and respect to the White House, after Nixon had just destroyed it."

He has high praise for President Truman. "Harry Truman was the best political President, and he'll be the best President of these 100 years," he said. "He understood politics, and was able to get the best people around him."

Franklin D. Roosevelt also was a good politician, he said, and added: "You have to give F.D.R. a lot of credit for a lot of things. But I liked Harry Truman much better, mainly because when he said something in the evening, he felt the same way the next morning."

Former Colleagues Assessed

As for his former colleagues, he said that Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, the Republican leader, was "a hell of a nice man, and a very competent senator, but he was never able to gather the Republicans around him and lead them."

"Bob has a temper," Mr. Goldwater said. "That's his big trouble."

Howard H. Baker of Tennessee, Mr. Dole's predecessor as Republican leader, was a "better leader," Mr. Goldwater said. "He could keep the party pretty close together."

As for Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the Democratic leader, "He's a nice fellow, but he spent too much time making lengthy speeches on the floor," Mr. Goldwater said. "I don't think that's the role of a leader."

These days, Mr. Goldwater said, he is happy to be in Arizona. "I don't miss the Senate," he said. "I miss the town. Mostly, I miss the people."

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